



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

THE MYTH OF CHAP GOH MEH AND THE LANTERNS IN 3D ANIMATION

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Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Design Technology)
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**THE MYTH OF CHAP GOH MEH AND THE LANTERNS IN 3D
ANIMATION**

CHAI TECK HUA

**This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours**

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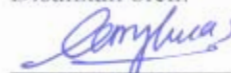
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Abstract:

Due to the rapid growth in our country, young generations nowadays spent most of their daily lives to earn for a living. Even during leisure time they spent the day sitting in front of the computer. Thus, they do not have any time left to listen to their old folks' storytelling about the past or about the myth and legend of their culture. As a result, the myth behind Chinese culture is slowly forgotten. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to study the myth, culture, and tradition that related to Chap Goh Meh. Based on the research a 3D animation will be created to tell the origin of Chap Goh Meh and its relation to the lanterns.

Keyword: *Chap Goh Meh, Lanterns, 3D animation*

Abstrak:

Kajian ini adalah berkenaan dengan cerita legenda Chap Goh Meh dalam animasi 3-D (Tiga Dimensi). Kemajuan teknologi telah menyebabkan remaja menghabiskan masa mereka di hadapan computer daripada meluangkan masa untuk mendengar cerita daripada mulut orang tua mereka. Senario ini menyebabkan legenda di sebalik budaya Cina semakin dilupakan oleh generasi muda. Kajian ini dijalankan untuk memahami cerita legenda Cina yang merangkumi kaedah soal selidik. Daripada hasil dapatan kajian tersebut, didapati bahawa Chap Goh Meh merupakan suatu peristiwa penting kepada bangsa Cina namun ia semakin dilupakan. Berdasarkan penyelidikan tersebut, sebuah animasi 3-D yang menceritakan legenda Chap Goh Meh telah dihasilkan untuk dihayati oleh masyarakat. Diharap kajian ini akan membantu dalam

menarik minat remaja untuk menghayati cerita lagenda terutama yang berkisarkan budaya mereka.

Kata Kunci: *Chap Goh Meh, Lanterns, 3D animation*

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Background of the study

The **Lantern Festival** or also known as **Chap Goh Meh** in Hokkien, is a festival celebrated on the fifteenth day of the first month in the lunar calendar. During ancient times, children go out at night to temples carrying paper lanterns and solve riddles written on the lanterns of the temples. The event is called *Cai Deng Mi*. Lanterns can be seen anywhere from people houses to the streets. In Chinese belief, *Chap Goh Meh* officially ends the Chinese New Year celebrations which is celebrate at first day of first month of lunar calendar. Besides solving riddles, people celebrate it with playing firecrackers, reunion dinner, gather around, enjoying the full moon, and etc. In country such as Malaysia and Singapore, “Lantern Festival” is also referred to the Mid-Autumn Festival or Mooncake Festival. Therefore to avoid confusion the word “*Chap Goh Meh*” is mostly been used.

In ancient times, the lanterns were very simply made, most of them made out of thin papers. Nowadays, lanterns comes with many complex designs and patterns, as well as functionality. For example, lanterns are now often made in many shapes such as animals or cartoon characters. Some of it also enable sound playback and with different lights.

1.1 Objective

- To identify the myth, culture, and tradition that related to Chap Goh Meh.
- To analyze the suitable storyline and technique of animation that explains the relationship between the lanterns and Chap Goh Meh.
- To produce an 3D animation that tells the story behind Chap Goh Meh.
- To validate the animation in terms of content of the story, visual design, and the effect used.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although Chap Goh Meh serves as an important festival in Chinese culture, the atmosphere is not as it used to be. According to Datuk Lau Kok Sing, President of United Sabah Chinese Communities Association of KK Life, "Chap Goh Mei is as important as the first day of Chinese New Year but unfortunately, nowadays, the atmosphere is no longer there". He continues to add that unlike those days where the children look forward to the Chap Goh Mei, kids nowadays, other than the dinner, doesn't seem to be keen in creating the atmosphere.

"One of the strengths of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as the Internet is the way they can help unlock distant expertise, knowledge and markets. However, this access – usually to ‘foreign’ content with foreign perspectives – has its limitations. Easier access to globalised knowledge is fast turning us into ‘consumers’ of distant and potentially irrelevant information. More worrying perhaps, developing countries are being ‘invaded’ by foreign ideas and

values that may undermine or overwhelm local cultural heritage and economic livelihoods.” (Peter Ballantyne, 2002). In addition, the animation of Malaysia is lack on local content. Most of it focus on foreign elements or other elements. For example, “*Seefood*” which focus around the life of underwater sea creature, often been criticise as copying Disney’s *Finding Nemo*. Even Goliath 3D, an award winning animation by Malaysia was also centred around Western civilization instead of local settings.

3D animation or CGI Animation is the process of creating animated image by the use of computer software. A 3D animation involves several processes such as modeling, texturing, rigging, and animating.

1.3 Significant of Research

The research is important to ensure the legends that have been told from generations to generations to be passed on to future generations. In this modern era, people obsessed with their daily job and do not have the time to understand the stories and legends of their culture. Furthermore, due to the advancement in technologies, books are getting less and less readers as one can access thousands of books online through the tip of a finger. Teenagers nowadays access their computer, televisions, and cellphone more than reading books. Therefore, the legends behind each culture are forgotten as generations passed on.

By utilizing the advancement of technologies, this research is to produce an animation of all ages to retell the wonderful myth behind the lantern.

1.4 Hypothesis

Adaption of the ancient legends into an animation will enhance people's knowledge on Chap Goh Meh as well as attract more young generation to know more about their own culture.

1.5 Limitation

Developing a 3D animation requires a lot more technical understanding than just drawing it on a paper. It requires various expertise from different fields, such as visual artist, audio designer, animator, and etc. Creating an animation oneself in a short period of time is very difficult.

1.6 Research Scope

The aim of the research is to create an animation based on the myth of Chap Goh Meh. Many Chinese culture and elements will be applied into the animation. The target audience is students from 13 to 25 years old.

1.7 Conclusion

At the end of the introduction chapter, a summary of the research topic has been done. An overview of the research including problems statements and objectives of Chap Goh Meh has been carried out. Therefore, researcher can now proceed to further research to achieve the objectives.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, topic related to the story behind Chap Goh Meh, visual elements, and issues faced by society nowadays. Topic mentioned will serve as justification of why ancient story should be re-told through animations.

2.1 Chap Goh Meh

"The Lantern Festival is a traditional Chinese festival since Han Dynasty more than 2000 years ago. In the early Tan Dynasty (618-907AD), it was called the Shan-Yuan (上元) Festival, because of Taoism. in the late Tan Dynasty, it was called the Yuan-Xiao (元宵) Festival. It was called Lantern Night in the Sun Dynasty (960-1297 A.D.). The Lantern Festival was used in Ching Dynasty (1644-1911 AD)." (Tan, 2008)

Based on the statement, Chap Goh Meh is over 2000 years old and has different names at different timeline.

"Those who can't come back for the reunion, can come back for the dinner on Chap Goh Mei, ang pows can still be given till Chap Goh Mei." (Lau, 2012)

Based on the statement, Chap Goh Mei is an important festival that unites families. It is during these times families members get together even though they've been "scatter" across the globe.

"The youth of today don't seem to have any knowledge about their cultural stories ... this is such a shame..."

(S.Raval, 2011)

According to the statement above, generations nowadays has forgotten their own culture and beliefs. If this continues, the future generation might lose their identity. Thus preserving a cultural stories is very important.

2.2 Character

"A character is defined by the individual characteristic traits that distinguish one person from another. A designer who creates a fictional character gives birth to something unique, an individual. This is precisely what the contributor to "Great New Character have achieved."

(zeixs, 2008)

According to Zeixs, each character have their own individual traits that differentiate them from one another.

2.3 3D Animation

"Computer 3D animation refers to the work of creating moving pictures in a digital environment that is three-dimensional. Through the careful manipulation of objects (3D models) within the 3D software, we can then export picture sequences which will give the illusion of movement (animation) based on how we manipulate the objects."

(So What Is 3D Animation, n.d.)

"animation is arguably the most important creative form of the 21st century... it is the omnipresent pictorial form of the modern era"

(Paul Wells, 1998)

Based on the statement above, it's clearly that 3D animation depends heavily on manipulation of software by oneself. It requires a lot of understanding in the technical aspect of the software. Besides that, animated film is considered one of the most important elements in the modern era nowadays.

2.4 Conclusion

In a nutshell, researcher is able to understand the previous research related to Chap Goh Meh. References to previous research were made in order to acquire quality and effective results. This chapter also allows researcher to proceed with the next chapter which is research methodology.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.0 Introduction

In a research, there are many types of method used to collect data and information. Each research has different ways of doing it. Basically the research can be breakdown into qualitative and quantitative method. For this research both methods are used.

3.1 Qualitative

i. Books and journal

Previous research and topic relate with this research will be gathered for the character development and storyline of the animation. Some of the sources of data collection are articles, journal, magazine, book and other type of information available.

ii. Visual Research

The study is focus on the visual elements such as environment design, Chinese element and trademark, and also color. The researcher also went to several places that contain Chinese elements such as temple, park, and museum. This study is to analyze what element should be included in the animation to deliver the concept to the audience.

iii. Video Analysis

Varieties of animation, movie, game trailer and images were selected to study on. The study is focus on the texture, rendering styles, color used, mood, concept, and the movement.

iv. Experimentation

Based on the data collected the researcher experimentation will be carried out. The experimentation is to find out the animation technique used in the animation. Researcher will use *Adobe After Effect*, *Adobe Photoshop*, *Adobe Premier Pro*, and *Autodesk Maya* to carry out the experiment.

3.2 Quantitative

i. Questionnaire

The researcher will collect data which related to the design of the character, style of the animation, and storyline of the topic. After collecting the data, the researcher will analyse it. The result will become guideline for researcher to improve the research. The questionnaire is divided into three sections. Section A is about demography. Section B is regarding the storyline and knowledge of Chap Goh Meh, while Section C is more into the styles and visual of the animation.

3.3 Conclusion

Data and information are collected to assist in creating the animation of Chap Goh Meh. Data are collected via qualitative and quantitative method. The findings will be used as source and reference for researchers.